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# Letter dated 26 April 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the thirty-first monthly report of the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The report covers the period from 24 March to 21 April 2016.

With regard to the destruction of the chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, the situation remains unchanged. One hangar has yet to be destroyed, given that the prevailing security environment continues to prevent access thereto. In addition, also as a result of the security situation, the OPCW Technical Secretariat remains unable to confirm the condition of two other stationary above-ground facilities. However, I take note of the report of the Director General, in which he states that the Syrian Arab Republic is exploring the possibility of safe access to one of the two stationary facilities.

With regard to the declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic, I welcome the preparations of the Director General, along with the Declaration Assessment Team, to engage with senior Syrian officials. It is my hope that the unresolved issues, including gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies, can be successfully addressed. In that regard, I take note that the Director General has also provided an information note on the review by the Technical Secretariat of the declaration and related disclosures of the Syrian Arab Republic.

I must reiterate my deep concern over the continuing allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, for which there can be no justification and for which those responsible must be held accountable. I note that the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to study all available information relating to such allegations.

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism is proceeding with the investigation of the nine selected cases. During the reporting period, the Leadership Panel travelled to Berlin and Tehran for consultations with government officials. Furthermore, the Panel travelled to Washington, D.C., on 25 April. The Mechanism continued to receive information relevant to its investigation from Member States. In addition, and in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 2235 (2015), it further engaged with non-governmental organizations and other entities operating in the Syrian Arab Republic or with knowledge about the nine cases under investigation. The Mechanism has also engaged the services of two forensic institutes that will assist it in its work as necessary.

(*Signed*) BAN Ki-moon

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## Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme" prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the OPCW Executive Council Decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, and the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure I). My report covers the period from 24 March 2016 to 21 April 2016 and also covers the reporting requirements of the Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013. Please also find attached an information note on the review by the Technical Secretariat of the declaration and related disclosures of the Syrian Arab Republic (see enclosure II).

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

**Enclosure I**

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

## Note by the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

## Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eight-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. This, the thirty-first monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 24 March to 21 April 2016.

## Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As reported previously, with respect to the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of 24, and three remain to be verified as destroyed. The security situation continues to prevent safe access to destroy one aircraft hangar and to confirm the condition of at least one of the two stationary above-ground facilities. The Syrian Arab

Republic is exploring the possibility to safely access the other stationary facility.

(b) On 15 April 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its twenty-ninth monthly report (EC-82/P/NAT.2, dated 15 April 2016) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

(c) The Syrian authorities have continued to extend the necessary cooperation in accordance with the implementation of subparagraph 1(e) of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

**Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities**

6. As reported previously, all the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

**Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic**

7. The Director-General has continued to communicate with senior officials of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

8. The Secretariat and the Syrian authorities have maintained their ongoing cooperation on outstanding issues regarding the Syrian initial declaration, as encouraged by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session (paragraph 6.17 of EC-76/6, dated 11 July 2014).

9. In accordance with Council decision EC-81/DEC.4, the Director-General, together with the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), has begun preparations to engage senior Syrian officials in order to address the unresolved issues, including gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies, in the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration and related submissions, which were identified in the Note by the Director-General, EC-81/HP/DG.1 (dated 22 February 2016).

10. At the same time, the DAT, in continuation of its efforts to verify the accuracy and completeness of the Syrian Arab Republic declaration, will also review the analytical results of the samples taken during its fourteenth visit, which took place in January 2016, before engaging the Syrian authorities. The analytical results are expected to arrive from the designated laboratories in the near future.

11. The Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives from the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the Syrian Arab Republic, discussed amending the tripartite agreement during its meeting in Beirut held from 5 to 7 April 2016. Notably, the amendments would accommodate the extension of support provided by UNOPS to the OPCW mission until the end of November 2016, and the logistical and administrative support that UNOPS will provide to the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). Also discussed was the extension of the agreements with contractors involved in the delayed destruction of the remaining aircraft hangar (CWPF). It is noted that, as at the cut-off date of

this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Supplementary resources**

12. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 5.6 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, and the European Union. Pledges from other donors have been made and are currently being processed.

**Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria**

13. In the reporting period, the FFM continued to study all available information relating to allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, and will be guided in its work by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), and Security Council resolution 2209 (2015). The OPCW also continues to extend its full cooperation and support to the JIM.

**Conclusion**

14. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the implementation of the Council's March 2016 decision (EC-81/DEC.4), as well as on the destruction and verification of the remaining aircraft hangar and confirmation of the status of the two stationary above-ground facilities.

## Enclosure II

### Review by the Technical Secretariat of the declaration and related disclosures of the Syrian Arab Republic

1. This information note offers the results of the review of the declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic conducted thus far by the OPCW Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") of the Organisation of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

**Background**

2. On 14 September 2013, the Syrian Arab Republic deposited with the Secretary General of the United Nations its instrument of accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (hereinafter "the Convention")[1] and declared that it would comply with its stipulations and observe them faithfully and sincerely, applying the Convention provisionally, pending its entry into force for the Syrian Arab Republic.

3. Accordingly, on 19 September 2013, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted a disclosure of its chemical weapons programme.

4. At its Thirty-Third Meeting, held on 27 September 2013, the Executive Council of the OPCW (hereinafter "the Council") adopted a decision entitled "Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons" (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013). This was followed by the adoption on the same day by the United Nations Security Council of resolution 2118 (2013), which endorsed the decision by the Council. The provisions of these two documents and the participation of the Syrian Arab Republic in the Convention established the framework for the elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme.

5. As required under the Council's decision (EC-M-33/DEC.1), on 2 October 2013 the Syrian Arab Republic submitted further information, to supplement that provided on 19 September 2013, as well as its initial declaration required by Article III of the Convention on 23 October 2013; this was followed by several amendments (dated 28 October 2013, 21 November 2013, 5 December 2013, 16 January 2014, 6 February 2014, 13 February 2014, 7 March 2014, 16 April 2014, 7 July 2014, and 14 July 2014).

**Work undertaken by the Secretariat**

6. The Secretariat has undertaken a continuous review of all information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic in order to ensure that all declaration related requirements established under the Convention, as well as the above-mentioned Council decision (EC-M-33/DEC.1), have been met. As a result, the Secretariat identified a number of gaps and inconsistencies, which were raised with the Syrian Arab Republic.

7. To support Syria clarify the inconsistencies noted in its declaration, the Director General decided to assemble Declaration Assessment Team (DAT),

[1] The Convention entered into force for the Syrian Arab Republic on 14 October 2013.

comprised of technical experts from within the Secretariat in order to facilitate the process of engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic on outstanding issues with respect to its declaration and later submissions. The Syrian officials expressed their willingness to enter into constructive sessions with the DAT and as a result the team first deployed to Damascus in April 2014 and later on for a second mission in May 2014.

8. Subsequent technical discussions between the DAT and Syrian authorities from late June to early July 2014 resulted in Syria's submission of an amendment to its initial declaration. In this amendment, Syria declared a facility for the production of ricin as a Chemical Weapons Production Facility. The amendment also included information regarding three other chemical weapons-related facilities for research and development.

9. Given the absence of supporting documentation, in September 2014, "additional transparency measures" were agreed upon between the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic, as follows:

(a) facilitating visits to sites/locations of interest;

(b) providing written statements prepared and signed by active participants; and

(c) making relevant personnel from all structures of the chemical weapons programme available for interviews with the Secretariat.

10. Making use of these additional transparency measures, the DAT has conducted to date 25 site visits, during which it collected 88 samples in order to validate the declared nature of activities at those sites. The samples were sealed, and transported out of the Syrian Arab Republic for further analysis. Appropriate measures to ensure the integrity and chain of custody of the samples were taken every time samples were collected and throughout the transportation and analysis process in accordance with normal working instructions and standard operating procedures set forth by the Secretariat. The samples have been analysed at OPCW designated laboratories. Each of the laboratories employed throughout this process has passed rigorous proficiency tests, following the criteria laid down by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 17025 quality system and OPCW quality management system in order to ensure a high level of confidence and credibility of the analytical findings and thus qualify as OPCW designated Laboratories.[2] In each instance, the results of the analysis of samples were shared with the Syrian Arab Republic in a timely manner. Any anomalies identified by the Secretariat were brought to the attention of the Syrian Arab Republic and thoroughly discussed during subsequent meetings.

11. The Secretariat has also received written statements and letters from the Syrian Arab Republic addressing various issues under discussion, as well as a short piece of video footage in relation to one of the topics.

12. In addition to the above, the DAT has conducted 70 interviews with individuals performing various functional roles within the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Approximately 94 hours of audio recording were generated from these

[2] The results of the last batch of samples collected in January 2016 are yet to be received by the Secretariat.

interviews. The information obtained in interviews has been used, in conjunction with other information received from the Syrian Arab Republic, to assess the accuracy of the information submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic. While most of the information received in interviews is in line with the narrative provided by the Syrian Arab Republic, inconsistencies and discrepancies have been identified and subsequently discussed with representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic.

13. As this work of the DAT progressed over the course of the last more than two years, new questions have arisen (particularly as a result of the analysis of samples collected during site visits) concerning a number of gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies with respect to the declaration and related submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic.

14. The Council at its Eightieth Session in October 2015 underscored the substantial unresolved issues, including the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies identified by the Secretariat in its report (EC-80/P/S/1) and stressed the importance of fully verifying that the declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic are accurate and complete, as required by the Convention and EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013. Furthermore, the Council requested the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic to expedite their efforts to resolve these gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies and further requested that the Director-General provide a report to the Council before its Eighty-First Session that details all unresolved issues, in particular specifying those for which no further progress has been possible.

15. In line with this request, on 22 February 2016, the Director-General issued a report on the work of the DAT which indicated that gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies remained with respect to chemical weapons facilities, activities, munitions, and chemical materials and outlined 17 unresolved issues, for nine of which no further progress had been possible (EC-81/HP/DG.1, dated 22 February 2016). The report concluded that the Secretariat was unable at that time to verify fully that the declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic are accurate and complete, as required by the Convention and EC-M-33/DEC.1.

16. Further to that, at its Eighty-First session in March 2016, the Council considered and adopted a decision on the above-mentioned report (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), in which it expressed concern regarding the findings of the above mentioned report of the Director-General and requested the Secretariat, through the Declaration Assessment Team, to continue its efforts, on an expedited basis, to verify the accuracy and completeness of the declaration and related disclosures of the Syrian Arab Republic, and to address the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies it has identified.

17. It also requested the Director-General, in parallel with the efforts of the Declaration Assessment Team, to meet with officials of the Syrian Arab Republic in order to address the unresolved issues as well as to underscore the importance of fully verifying that the declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic are accurate and complete, as required by the Convention and EC-M-33/DEC.1.

18. In light of this request, the Director General invited officials and relevant Syrian experts to high-level consultations on the assessment of the declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic. These consultations will consist of a four-day meeting at OPCW headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands, between 27 and 30 April 2016.

19. The Director-General will inform the Executive Council of the outcome of these consultations with the Syrian authorities in advance of its Eighty-Second Session in July 2016.

20. In line with the decision of the Council (EC-81/DEC.4), the Director-General will continue to include as part of his monthly reports to the Security Council made through the Secretary-General pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) further information on the implementation of the aforementioned Council decision.

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# Report of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the alternate representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 10 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations stating that Ms. Tasneem Akhtar and Mr. Graham Bambrough have been appointed alternate representatives of the United Kingdom on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, that letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

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